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AN

ELEGY ON THE DEATH

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE *EDMUND BURKE*.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

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THE RIGHT HONORABLE LORDS OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL

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AN

ELEGY ON THE DEATH

OF

*THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDMUND BURKE.*BY MRS. WEST, *K*

AUTHOR OF THE GOSSIP'S STORY, MISCELLANEOUS POEMS, A TRAGEDY, &c.

.....AT LAST
 OF MIDDLE AGE ONE RISING, EMINENT
 IN WISE DEPORT, SPAKE MUCH OF RIGHT AND WRONG,
 OF JUSTICE, OF RELIGION, TRUTH AND PEACE,
 AND JUDGMENT FROM ABOVE.

MILTON.

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1797.

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E L E G Y

ON THE DEATH OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE *EDMUND BURKE.*

WHAT Mighty Spirit, in the dark Abode
Of Earth long prison'd, gains its wish'd Release;
Who journeys now along the starry Road
To claim the Birth-right of eternal Peace?

No vulgar Grief these decent Rites bespeak,
No pageant Woe attends this solemn Bier;
Unfeign'd Affection bathes each Mourner's Cheek,
And Love, and Reverence consecrate the Tear.

To grace thine Obsequies, lamented Shade!
Aerial Forms from sapphire Clouds emerge,
Cherubic Hands the cypress Garlands braid,
And Harps of Seraphs hymn thy funeral Dirge.

Genius, with folded Arms, and Wings depress'd,
 Deplores the Mind that caught his brightest Flame ;
 And British Freedom rends her matron Vest,
 Mourning the Champion of her injur'd Fame.

Reft of his purple Robe, and floating Plume,
 Sad Chivalry attends with Scutcheon torn ;
 He plants with deathless Palms the hallow'd Tomb,
 To shield thy Dust from Vandals yet unborn.

Thine are these Obsequies, O BURKE !—to thee
 Rites so appropriate can alone belong ;
 O long perturbed Spirit ! art thou free
 From Scenes of Faction, Violence, and Wrong ?

I hail thy Sojourn in the peaceful Earth,
 There rest secure, for all thy Toils are o'er ;
 The World's dread Tempest spares departed Worth,
 And Slander's poison'd Darts can wound no more.

Thy

Thy silver'd Head, which e'en from sacred Age
 Claim'd no Protection, sinks in calm Repose;
 Thy Bosom glows no more with generous Rage,
 Nor throbs with patriot, nor parental Woes.

Friend of thy Country! Friend of Human Kind!
 Whose lofty Spirit nobly spurn'd Control,
 Whose Errours spoke a pure ingenuous Mind,—
 Peace to thy Dust, and Blessings on thy Soul!

Go—join the Host of Britain's mighty Dead,
 Review thy Wentworth 'mid surrounding Stars,
 Hear Falkland blame the King for whom he bled,
 See Hampden blush to mention Freedom's Wars.

There, where the virtuous, tho' in Life disjoin'd,
 Confess the Sympathy of kindred Worth,
 Go—with unfading Wreaths thy Temples bind,
 While Toil and Sorrow vex the troubled Earth:

For States ephemeral, in every Clime
 Start into Birth, and shed a meteor Glare;
 While spacious Empires, eldest born of Time,
 Hurl'd from their Orbits, are dissolv'd in Air.

Now maniac Anarchy, by Conquest join'd,
 Fetters the Nations in Contention's Chain,
 Deceives with Sophistry the human Mind,
 While her red Standards hide the ravag'd Plain.

Unmov'd by Pity, unappall'd by Shame,
 Like Asia's Tyger, fell and unsubdued,
 Licence, usurping Freedom's holy Name, *
 Pours on the World her black Tartarean Brood.

By Famine scath'd, imbrued with mortal Gore,
 Man on the desolated Earth falls prone;
 Sooth'd by the Dreams of flattering Hope no more
 His wasted Tribes emit one feeble Groan.

* "Licence they mean, when they cry Liberty."—*Milton's Sonnets.*

In vain commission'd from the Realms of Love,
 Peace with cerulean Pinion cleaves the Air;
 Denied a Shelter for her harrafs'd Dove,
 She seeks the sacred Ark, and trembles there.

For still the Tempest, which from stormy Seine
 Horrific rose, pursues its destin'd Way;
 Bursts o'er th' imperial Realms of Charlemagne,
 And scorns the Limits of Ausonian Sway:

From distant Elbe, to Tiber's sacred Head,
 The wasteful Ruin unresisted speeds;
 Old Tagus trembles in his golden Bed,
 And Alpheus feebly laves Sicilia's Meads.

The frighten'd Ploughman quits his custom'd Toil,
 The Shepherd pants beneath the Buckler's Load;
 While the foul Bramble riots in the Soil,
 Where the Vine ripen'd, and the Olive glow'd.

O Italy!—where Nature, ever gay,
 Reclin'd at Ease, the Horn of Plenty dress'd,
 Where soft Favonius wak'd the early Day,
 And Evening sunk on Zephyr's balmy Breast:

O Italy!—where Science lov'd to rove,
 Where Genius felt his noblest Powers expand,
 Where Sculpture stole Promethean Warmth from Jove,*
 And bolder Painting snatch'd his plastic Wand:

Now clashing Arms thy shuddering Lares fright,
 From ambush'd War thy Woodland Dryads fly;
 Loud Cannons rend the peaceful Veil of Night,
 And lurid Smoke obscures thine azure Sky.

* Shakespeare thus accents the Word Promethean:

“ I know not where is the Promethean Heat,

“ That can thy Light relumine.”——*Othello*.

Now

Now o'er the Mantuan's laurell'd Tomb no more
 Shall Taste reclin'd her classic Dreams prolong;
 The Tuscan Maid, who weeps on Anio's Shore,
 Chants not the hallow'd Notes of Taffo's Song. .

Shock'd at Democracy's destructive Fires,
 The Shade of Petrarch flies Avignon's Gloom;
 And from the Vatican's dishonour'd Spires,
 Sees the predicted Fall of Papal Rome.

Say, ruin'd Venice! shall your gilded Prows,
 And filken Sails, now shade your wedded Sea?—
 You from Barbaric Slumber first arose,
 And taught admiring Europe to be free:

Yet Freedom's spurious Race with Infult bends
 Your stately Head, and claims its naval Crowns;
 While Austria from your Hand the Rudder rends,
 And, tir'd, reposes in your ravish'd Towns.

How

How oft, firm Austria! did thy patient Soul
 Rise from Defeat successful War to wage;
 While thy young Hero rush'd to Glory's Goal,
 And claim'd Remembrance in her fairest Page.

What Time Danubius saw his victor Car
 Chase from Bohemia's Hills th' invading Band;
 When Veterans, hoary in the Ranks of War,
 Resign'd the Truncheon to his abler Hand.

The Hero turns—for through Carinthia's Wastes
 Bellona sounds her long unheard Alarm;
 The Stirian Peasant to the Mountain hastes,
 And weeps the Ruin of his peaceful Farm.

See, where, obedient to the Call of Woe,
 The Patriot Chief protects his native Coast;
 While, rich with Roman Spoils, his mighty Foe
 Leads from Eridanus his conquering Host.

What high Authorities, what sanction'd Ties,

Await, brave Austrian! thy decisive Sword:—

Shall the true Sun of Liberty arise?

Shall Truth and Reason own their Rights restor'd?

Ah, no! the Sovereign Ruler will not deign

To check with Mercy the commission'd Rod;

Man has not yet expung'd his guilty Stain,

Nor, by Affliction taught, confess'd a God.

For, from his Sapphire Throne the Eternal Sire

Beheld Religion from her Altars driv'n;

While Infidelity defied his Ire,

And proudly rear'd her horrent Front to Heav'n.

He mark'd the Fury's unresisted Rage,

Blast fair Creation with pestiferous Breath,

Tear the last Comfort from enfeebled Age,

And dash the Chalice from the Lip of Death.

He heard the Cries of injur'd Justice, tir'd *
 Of Wrongs from Mortals of Titanian Birth;
 While Kings, seduc'd by fordid Views, conspir'd
 To chase their best Protector from the Earth.

Alike incens'd, he saw the Polacs bleed,
 Quenching with Tides of Slaughter Praga's Flame;
 Saw Gallic Demons to the Scaffold lead
 The Royal Victim of his People's Shame.

* The Author entreats, that, in this and the following Stanzas, she may rather be considered as a Female judging from Sentiments of Moral Right, than as a presuming Politician. Warmly attached to the Cause of lawful Government, Subordination, and Property, she equally laments and reprobates the narrow Motives which induced Sovereign Princes to swell the Triumphs of Anarchy, and to undermine the Principles by which their own Thrones are supported by the forcible Dismemberment of Poland, an independent Kingdom, and by converting a War professedly undertaken on the broad Basis of Universal Security, into a selfish System of partial Emolument.— She confesses her Ideas may be too theoretical for Practice; and she is convinced, that her reclusé Habits, and limited Information, will not allow her to judge, whether Political Necessity may not in some Degree diminish the Turpitude of Actions, which, in the private Intercourse between Man and Man, would be accounted Crimes.

Father

Father of Righteousness! didst Thou survey
 Confederate Powers, in Honour's fair Disguise,
 Mark out distracted France their destin'd Prey,
 And to themselves allot the Sacrifice?

Fountain of Truth and Goodness! didst Thou hear
 Democracy to Faith and Right aspire,
 While Lyons sunk beneath her murd'rous Spear,
 And Horror shriek'd along the Banks of Loire?

Yes, Thou wert Witness! Thy Almighty Hand
 Gave to Leviathan resistless Power;
 Thou said'st—"Arise, O Sword! to smite the Land,"—
 And Slaughter rages its permitted Hour.

Thus when, of old, from Judah's Rebel Coast
 The Cries of Guilt o'erpower'd enduring Grace,
 Thy Angel summon'd the Chaldean Host,
 And Pagans triumph'd o'er the chosen Race.

Self-glorying in his Might, the Victor trod

O'er prostrate Solyma's defenceless Wall:

" Vain Man! exalted by an angry God

" To punish guilty Man, thou too shalt fall.

" 'Tis not on thee the Beams of Favour shine,

" Soon shall thy proud Supremacy be o'er;

" The Persian views thee with an Eye malign,

" And Babylon shall sink, to rise no more."

Such was the Patriot Prophet's closing Strain,

From Egypt's Wastes the holy Exile * cried;

He warn'd his Country, but he warn'd in vain,—

He told the Ruin of her Foes,—and died.

* Jeremiah.

For him, the martyr'd Seer, * whose Harp Divine
 In deathless Numbers Salem's Woes deplor'd,
 The Royal Virgins of Jofiah's Line
 In Taphnes' lofty Towers their Dirges pour'd.

Like them, ye British Maidens ! let the Lyre
 With glowing Warmth your BURKE's Renown emblaze ;
 Revere the Semblance of Prophetic Fire,
 And give the Patriot fall'n, a Patriot's Praise.

His zealous Hands a spacious Temple rais'd,
 Sacred to Liberty of British Birth ;
 Around the Altar of the Goddesses blaz'd
 The splendid Trophies of her ancient Worth.

* St. Jerome relates, from an ancient Tradition, that Jeremiah was stoned to Death by the Jews, at Tahpanhes, for preaching against their Idolatry.—Tahpanhes, or Taphnes, was one of the principal Cities of Egypt.

He view'd with fond Idolatry the Shrine,
 And threaten'd each Affailant to engage;
 His ported Spear now menac'd Right Divine;
 Now brav'd the Shafts of Democratic Rage.

E'en while that Fiend, seductive, young, and gay,
 Yet pure from Slaughter, first withstood the Laws,
 He told the Horrors of her future Sway,
 And lifted Truth in Order's sacred Cause.

His warning Voice, predicting future Woes,
 The torpid Soul of Apathy illum'd;
 No more complaining of a folded Rose, *
 Voluptuous Sloth a manly Port assum'd.

* Alluding to the Story of the Sybarite, who complained that he could not sleep, because the Rose-Leaves lay doubled under him.

Daughters of Britain! let the grateful Tear
 Of kindred Worth your Champion's Ashes dew;
 His Breast, like your's, impassion'd and sincere,
 Glow'd with the Virtues he rever'd in you.

Like you, he sorrow'd for a noble Train,
 Once the bright Gems that grac'd the Gallic Throne,
 Now scorn'd and slander'd by the Base and Vain,
 Chas'd from all Countries, and proscrib'd their own.

Mourn him, ye Muses! for he well could trace
 Your radiant Visions to their hallow'd Source;
 He knew to mingle every Attic Grace
 With Roman Freedom, Dignity and Force.

Who now shall bid the bold impassion'd Strain
 Of manly Eloquence each Heart inspire?
 Who now in Britain shall awake again
 A Tully's Pathos, and a Tully's Fire?

Like

Like him, the British Patriot's Spirit soar'd,
 Above the specious Cæsar of the Day; *
 Whilst in the Idol by the Crowd ador'd,
 He view'd Ambition panting for his Prey.

With Ardour such as once the Forum saw,
 Ere Roman Freedom at Philippi bled,
 He urg'd the violated Rights of Law,
 And in her Cause invoc'd her Sages dead.

Nor did Arpinum's Hills, or Antium's Grove,
 Where Private Virtue prompted deathless Deeds,
 Glow with the Radiance of Domestic Love,
 More pure than Beaconsfield's enamell'd Meads.

* The Roman Populace, being deceived by Cæsar's Pretensions to Patriotism, espoused his Part; but Cicero discovered his ambitious Designs.

There

There the firm Friend, the Husband ever kind,
 Indulg'd the Sympathies to Nature dear ;
 There the fond Father to the Grave resign'd
 His only Hope, and sunk upon his Bier :

For, to the Sadness of Parental Woes
 Did Public Sorrow added Gloom impart ;
 Dark and more dark the pensive Future rose,
 Till dire Forebodings burst his generous Heart.

O worthy purer Times, and happier Days !
 When Virtue triumph'd in its best Reward,
 Ere sordid Interest quench'd the Love of Praise,
 Or Party faction'd what the Soul abhorr'd.

And ye, keen Spirits ! who delight to scan
 The obvious Fault, to latent Merit blind ;
 Respect the Failings of imperfect Man,
 And spare the Weakness of a mighty Mind.

Lo! Party drops her Vizor at his Grave,
 Reviving Friendship owns her former Power,
 And, as she weeps the Learn'd, the Good, the Brave,
 Forgets the petty Conflicts of the Hour.

While the pure Souls, to whose enraptur'd Gaze
 Philosophy her starry Roll hath giv'n,
 (Not the false Fiend, whose Meteor Lamp betrays,
 But she that opes the golden Gates of Heaven.)

While those pure Souls, who, teaching Truths divine,
 Religious Faith with Human Knowledge blend,
 The Dust, in pious Hope, to Dust resign,
 And, at his Maker's Summons, yield their Friend:

"Now," they exclaim, "beyond the Bounds of Time
 "His Soul reposes in Eternal Joy,
 "Sees the clear Vision of the Great Sublime,
 "And tastes the Beautiful without Alloy.

"In

- " In Realms where Truth and Righteousness preside,
 " Where Mercy shines with Lustre unprofan'd,
 " He sees Omnipotence the Balance guide,
 " And Human Passions work the End ordain'd :

 " He sees Events announce a distant Cause,
 " Great in the Sight of God, to Man unseen ;
 " Beholds unerring Order's sacred Laws
 " Direct the Movements of the vast Machine.

 " Now with Cherubic Intellect inform'd,
 " His Mind expatiates o'er a boundless Store ;
 " Now the pure Zeal, that once the Patriot warm'd,
 " Bids the rapt Seraph kindle and adore." *

* " The rapt Seraph that adores and burns." — *Pope*.

THE END.

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